

# THE CREATIVITY

HERE, THE SECOND ANNUAL CREATIVITY FIFTY. THE LIST REPRESENTS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY BRAIN TRUST, A GROUP OF PEOPLE FROM ACROSS THE BRAND CREATIVITY AND CONSUMER CULTURE SPECTRUM THAT COLLECTIVELY INVENTED OR EXECUTED THE BIGGEST IDEAS OF THE PAST YEAR. AMONG THE 50, YOU'LL FIND AGENCY CREATIVES, DIRECTORS, DESIGNERS, MARKETERS, TECH AND ENTERTAINMENT VISIONARIES, AND A FEW OVERACHIEVERS WE CAN'T EVEN LABEL. SOME OF THEM YOU'LL KNOW FROM ONE SINGULARLY SENSATIONAL PIECE OF WORK THAT DEFINED 2006; SOME JUST CONSISTENTLY CHANGE OUR WAY OF THINKING AND WORKING. ALL OF THEM ENLIGHTENED AND INSPIRED US.



**J ALLARD, CORPORATE VICE PRESIDENT/CHIEF XNA ARCHITECT, MICROSOFT**

It's either bravery or insanity that would cause one to tackle the 50 million-pound iGorilla that is Apple's music machine, but Microsoft's J Allard has been put in charge of doing just that. As he demonstrated on his last project—a videogame console you may have heard about called the Xbox—he is one of a few proven giantslayers in the world of entertainment technology. Back in 1999, when word got out that Allard had convinced Billy Gates and Co. to take on the mighty Sony PlayStation, many people called them outright crazy. But considering that the Xbox had outsold the PS2 by late 2004, and that the Xbox 360 has usurped PlayStation's status as the go-to broadband-enabled console, many a curious eyebrow was raised at Allard's latest adventure, called the Zune. Apart from its anti-iPodish retro design, the key difference between the devices of Allard and Apple is the Zune's WiFi-enabled technology, which allows users to share songs. And it's this difference that Microsoft seems bent on exploring in order to carve out its own space on the MP3 player landscape. Tech talk aside, perhaps the most inspired idea behind the Zune launch was its conscious inclusion of musicians and artists in both its development and promotion. Instead of picking a fight with the iPod head-on, the Zune chose to work its way in from the fringes. Given his big-picture proclivities, expect Allard to go several steps further with the device and orchestrate connectivity in the broader sense, in which Zune isn't just a music player but a link in Microsoft's entertainment chain. A scan of Xbox skepticism from the past is eerily familiar to that aimed at the Zune today (though granted there wasn't a brown Xbox to act as a joke magnet). But if the same precedent of technology and patience is applied to the Zune as was the Xbox, Allard may again have the last laugh.

**DANTE ARIOLA, DIRECTOR, MJZ**

Winning the Directors Guild of America Award for commercials achievement earlier this year capped a stellar 2006 for Ariola. The four-time DGA nominee and Brooklyn native was recognized on the merits of Travelers' "Snowball" from Fallon/Minneapolis, which brought the *Katamari Damacy* concept of an ever-increasing ball of objects Stateside; Johnnie Walker's "Android" out of BBH/London, a monologue delivered by a robot channeling *Blade Runner's* Roy Batty; and Coca-Cola's "First Taste" from Wieden + Kennedy/Amsterdam, a fun spot in which a retirement home geezer sips a Coke and begins to embrace life, getting tattoos, going off the high dive and hooking up with twin senior hotties. All demonstrate the continuing evolution of Ariola's often mysterious, sophisticated style.

Says Ariola: "I feel more at home with any kind of storytelling, which has become a word in quotations, than with shooting a visual thing where you have to create tone or message just with visuals. Telling a story is an easier way to get a response or a laugh."



**JAMIE BARRETT AND STEVE SIMPSON, PARTNERS/CREATIVE DIRECTORS, GOODBY, SILVERSTEIN & PARTNERS**

*Creativity's* 2006 Agency of the Year, GS&P has been in a transitional stage for some years now, as so many agencies have. But last year they put it all together with cross-platform work for clients like Hewlett-Packard, Comcast, the California Milk Processor Board and Saturn. With no less than half the shop's creative output being nontraditional work, Jeff Goodby called it an agency "renaissance," led particularly by high-profile efforts for HP and Comcast. Steve Simpson says, "My favorite project of the year was 'The Computer is Personal Again' campaign. It's a global campaign for the one major division of HP we'd never worked for before, and it's been a draw for brilliant creative talent, both inside and outside the agency." It was also an amazing demo of celeb borrowed interest, with the magnetic Jay-Z to the fore, without ever showing the face of a celeb. The 2006 hit list included integrated campaigns for Comcast, with the outstanding "Comcastic" site and the comedy of the "Slowskys," not to mention the Milk Board's elaborate PlanetInNeed.com and CowAbduction.com; nor one can overlook the Google Earth-assisted "250,000 Mile Test Drive" for Saturn. Even smaller clients like Specialized bikes and Adobe got a big online treatment, the former with "Ride in Theater," the latter with "The Creative Mind."

Jamie Barrett on his proudest accomplishment of 2006: "Helping to redefine the agency and to some extent redefining myself. I'm a relatively old horse who was led to nontraditional water, and I drank. A creative director can no longer be a specialist. With all due respect to my first mentor, Tom McElligott, where is he?"

Steve Simpson on his proudest accomplishment of 2006: "Seeing the agency win recognition for the diversity of our work across all media. We've been doing it for longer than people think, but the recognition is nice, if a little late."



**JAMIE BARRETT**



**STEVE SIMPSON**

PHOTOS OF BARRETT AND SIMPSON BY CLAUDE SHADE

# 50

J Allard  
 Dante Ariola  
 Jamie Barrett and Steve Simpson  
 Cliff “Cliffy B” Bleszinski  
 Alex Bogusky and Andrew Keller  
 Bono  
 Sergey Brin and Larry Page  
 Richard Bullock and Andy Fackrell  
 Juan Cabral and Richard Flintham  
 Brian Carmody and Patrick Milling Smith  
 Rob Curley  
 Tony Davidson and Kim Papworth  
 Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris  
 David Droga  
 Jim Farley  
 Ze Frank  
 Matt Freeman  
 Janus Friis and Niklas Zennström  
 Steve Gandolfi  
 Michel Gondry  
 Gerry Graf, Ian Reichenthal and Scott Vitrone  
 Chad Hurley and Steve Chen  
 Satoru Iwata and Shigeru Miyamoto  
 Steve Jobs  
 Pat Joseph  
 Jon Kamen and Frank Scherma  
 Nick Law  
 Silvia Lagnado  
 Kylie Matulick and Todd Mueller  
 Mary Minnick  
 Peter Moore  
 Al Moseley and John Norman  
 Yugo Nakamura  
 Benjamin Palmer  
 Chris Palmer  
 Mark Parker  
 PJ Pereira  
 Andrea Ragnetti  
 Kevin Roddy  
 David Roman  
 Philip Rosedale  
 Blake Ross  
 Robert Saville and Mark Waites  
 Susan Sellers, Georgianna Stout  
 and Michael Rock  
 Erich Stamminger  
 Jureporn “Judee” Thaidumrong  
 Ed Ulbrich  
 Ted Ward  
 Sebastián Wilhelm and Maximiliano Anselmo  
 Ivan Zacharias

## CLIFF “CLIFFY B” BLESZINSKI, LEAD DESIGNER, EPIC GAMES

Watch out, Master Chief—the overmuscled epitome of badassitude, Marcus Fenix, is coming up behind you with some sort of chainsaw bayonet. Xbox 360’s *Gears of War* has firmly shoved the *Halo* franchise from its dominance on the console, shipping three million units in the 10 weeks following its initial November 2006 release, and wresting control of the top slot in Xbox Live from the Bungie shooter. The critically acclaimed *Gears* is the latest triumph for Cliff Bleszinski, aka Cliffy B, lead designer at Epic Games and a principal figure behind the developer’s previous bestsellers in the Unreal series. The 32-year-old Massachusetts native is a guiding force in gaming, putting a brash public face on the murky and seemingly thankless tasks surrounding the creation of a game’s universe. Once he’d finished executing his vision in the *Gears* world, Bleszinski took an active role in the marketing of the game, which broke through the clutter most notably with the arresting “Mad World” TV spot, a decidedly emo take on the blood and guts game.

On creating “Mad World”: “It was its own brand of counter-programming in the way it juxtaposed the music and the visual atmosphere of the game. It was a very girlfriend-friendly kind of commercial, which stood out from any guitar and techno music thing that might pop up. What wound up happening was that 80 percent of the gamers loved it and 20 percent couldn’t stand it, and those 20 percent remixed the damn thing and put it on YouTube, so we basically won them over as well. That’s one of the crucial factors behind the marketing success of the game.”



## ALEX BOGUSKY, CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER; ANDREW KELLER, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR, CRISPIN PORTER + BOGUSKY

Bogusky and Keller did little in 2006 to waver from the style of advertising their shop is known for—brash, bold and game-changing. They continued to tango with forms outside of the standard ad fare, yielding more breakthrough work and innovative approaches to the agency-client relationship. Sprite got “SubLymonal” and became part of the *Lost Experience* alternate reality game. The “Safe Happens” campaign made realistic in-commercial car crashes fodder for the watercoolers, the blogosphere and the newsmidias, while the agency’s equity partnership with clothing maker Haggard yielded some manly life lessons from “Pete and Red,” prompting more talk of the brand than we’ve heard since shopping the husky department of Kohl’s in 1992. Furthermore, the agency pushed the limits and challenged public opinion with the digital resurrection of icon Orville Redenbacher, ensuring CP+B remains the most polarizing ad agency on the planet. On top of all this, the agency moved into its new Boulder office and produced a series of low-cost Burger King Xbox games that have sold 3.2 million copies in five months—something Bogusky cites as one of his favorite projects of all time.

Bogusky on being culturally relevant: “We describe relevancy as being part of the conversation pop culture is having with itself. There are pretty tight parameters in what we [as a culture] accept and don’t accept, and the things that we accept in that process are dynamic and create a lot of talk.”

Keller on the move to Boulder: “It really just gives the agency the feeling it can accomplish anything. It’s important for us to take action and do unique things because it helps us build our own belief system. When someone says ‘I don’t know if we can get a TV commercial produced for that amount of money in that time, I say, ‘Someone here was able to create an agency and move everyone out here in 10 months.’ And that’s the sort of thing that inspires me.”



BOGUSKY (LEFT) AND KELLER



## BONO, MUSICIAN/ACTIVIST

You don’t have to like his music; you might be inclined to roll your eyes when he appears on your TV; perhaps you even have some strange qualms about U2 relocating to Amsterdam for tax purposes. But the artist and activist known as Bono is due credit for building a new kind of rock star brand. While other celebrities are flashing their bits and generally seeming to exist only to drive the schadenfreude-fueled fame economy, Bono leveraged his public face to bring attention and funds to those furthest removed from his privileged ilk. With Project Red, Bono has created a way to turn brands into goodwill by harnessing Western consumers’ unstoppable buying urge. Bono became vocal on global humanitarian issues, founding DATA (Debt, Trade, AIDS, Africa) in ’02 with Bobby Shriver. The U2 founder launched Project Red with Shriver in ’06 to mobilize private-sector dollars, signing on marketers like Gap, Apple, Motorola and Converse to develop, promote and sell (Product) RED products, contributing a portion of sales to AIDS programs. Critics cite RED’s disappointing marketing budget-to-money raised ratio, but the effort has raised huge awareness and marked an innovation in brand-related giving. With wife Ali Hewson and jeans guy Rogan Gregory, Bono also launched Edun, a clothing line that actually looks good and does good for developing economies. The three-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee calls it “conscious commerce.” We call it the tip of the socially responsible marketing iceberg and an important, if imperfect, model for big-picture creativity.



FALLON/LONDON'S CABRAL (LEFT) AND FLINTHAM

**SERGEY BRIN AND LARRY PAGE, FOUNDERS, GOOGLE**

Is it better to be loved or feared? Yes. Along with a little skepticism over the YouTube deal, Google continued to generate more awe, more terror, more envy and, well, more dollars than just about any online entity on the brand scene last year. The web Goliath's revenue grew 67 percent in the fourth quarter of '06, but that's hardly the point. After establishing itself, once again, as the master of all search engines and remaking the online ad-selling business, Google branched out into print ads and radio—building its dMarc ad platform last year. TV should be next, though the plans Google began making with big media in '06 to license content and resell TV ad inventory have been troubled. The company also mixed and mingled with advertisers and strengthened its bond with the agency creative community, offering up nifty ideas for using various Google toys. In one famous instance, Google approached its Goo brethren Goodby, Silverstein & Partners with ideas for making its Google Earth technology (up until then primarily used by slack-jawed surfers to zero in on the backyard of the house they grew up in) useful for marketers. The result was Goodby's fun and effective "250,000 Mile Test Drive," wherein viewers clicking on a banner could zoom through Google Earth all the way into their local Saturn dealership, where they could meet the real dealer and take a digital test drive. Google also worked with Nike and AKQA/London on the brilliant "Run London" site, which features a RouteFinder component whereby runners build and share bespoke trails with the help of Google Maps. It also partnered with Nike, on the football-themed social networking site, "Joga." And, of course, Google continued to be an innovator's moistest, geekiest dream, with initiatives like "20 percent time," where workers may devote a day a week to side projects (a policy which has, of course, yielded many of the company's new products).



PAGE (LEFT) AND BRIN

**RICHARD BULLOCK AND ANDY FACKRELL, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTORS, 180 AMSTERDAM**

When 180 opened its doors in Amsterdam in 1988, it was haunted by some pretty serious controversy. Its founding partners, Wieden/Amsterdam alums Chris Mendola and Alex Melvin, former execs on the Nike account, had gotten the boot from their previous shop reportedly on suspicion of courting Nike's biggest competitor, adidas. But whether they were moonlighting or not is just dust on the history books at this point, since the agency, true to its name, pulled a 180 and went on to conceive some of the most remarkable advertising for that very brand, like the elegant "Wake Up Call" and the much lauded "Impossible is Nothing" global campaign, created with TBWA/San Francisco. Last year, under the leadership of ECDs Andy Fackrell and Richard Bullock, 180 launched the massive World Cup "+10" campaign, enlisting soccer pros to go out and form their own amateur teams, which went on to play in genuine exhibition matches. To pull it off, 180 played ringleader to about 50 partner agencies, just one example of how the shop has made art out of the tag team. In November, it joined forces with BBDO/N.Y. to win the U.S. Sony Electronics business, soon after which it ended its indie status and joined the Omnicom network. Then 180 was at it again, teaming with HakuHodo to win Sony's global branding work. In December, the shop also opened its first outpost in L.A.; according to an agency representative, it will have 40-plus staffers by year's end.

Bullock on the relationship between creativity and real business: "It's like two north magnets that are constantly being pushed together but try and force themselves apart. It's our job to keep pushing them together."



BULLOCK (LEFT) AND FACKRELL

**JUAN CABRAL, CREATIVE DIRECTOR; RICHARD FLINTHAM, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR, FALLON/LONDON**

After unifying Sony's electronics marketing under the "Like no other" line and bestowing the unforgettable "Balls," unto the adworld, Fallon/London didn't think to rest. Instead, in 2006, the agency shot straight into "Paint," an idea conceived in tandem with its beloved predecessor. As if choosing to throw off the mantle of a sophomore slump with sheer magnitude, Fallon and Academy Films' Jonathan Glazer executed what surely was the year's largest advertising spectacle, unleashing onto a sleepy Glasgow tower block a fireworks show of paint—70,000 liters of it, along with several hundred pounds of explosives. Fans populated YouTube and Flickr with video and photos shot from the set—Cabral got an e-mail from a friend in Argentina with video from the shoot before he had even seen the dailies. Beyond that, coming off its 2006 Outdoor Grand Prix-winning campaign for the Tate Britain, the agency conceived an inventive way to lure young visitors to the Tate Modern with the "Tate Tracks" campaign, enlisting underground musicians to compose original tunes inspired by an artwork of their choice. Meanwhile, Fallon won a dogfight pitch for Orange, and its first efforts for the client—a series of quirky, touching spots directed by Fredric Planchon, Dougal Wilson and Ringan Ledwidge—look promising.

Flintham on 2006: "Thankfully, quite naturally, we fell into the process of it being a conversation rather than a very stringent brief at the beginning of lots of projects. When we took a couple of steps back, we actually realized we had a lot of people around us who were all thinking differently."

Cabral on "Paint" as an event: "We were there in Glasgow for two days, there were clouds, you had 200 people just sitting waiting, the camera's pointed at these monstrous things with paint about to explode, but nobody knew whether it would work or not. It felt like *Lost in La Mancha*—we might have wound up with half an ad. But I think people would still like that half an ad. I like the fact that we got ourselves into that situation, and I'm glad that the client allowed himself to believe in that illusion."

**BRIAN CARMODY AND PATRICK MILLING SMITH, EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS, SMUGGLER**

Ambition, daring, nimble creative approaches and a family-like culture are the building blocks of this production dynamo, founded five years ago by former Satellite head of sales Brian Carmody and producer Patrick Milling Smith. The shop has rapidly grown from spitfire startup to one of advertising's most respected and sought after production players, known for bringing ingenuity and high-end creative to the job—from both its directing and its production talents. Last year was an especially fertile one for the Smugglers, yielding the Cyber Grand Prix-winning viral hoax “Still Free” for Marc Ecko and Droga5, shot by Randy Krallman, and featuring the mysterious tagger who makes his mark on the President's jet. Other moments of note came from Happy, who were behind the bizarre, possibly seizure-inducing “SubLymonal” campaign for Sprite and another green frenzy for adidas' adicolor podcasts; Brian Beletic was at the top of his game channeling MJ through various young athletes for Brand Jordan, while Ivan Zacharias turned up for adidas, Vaseline and Nike, as well as a Diet Coke extravaganza that debuted during last month's Oscars. Meanwhile, the company has been venturing online with Droga5, developing a brand-driven content portal set to go live in the spring.

Patrick Milling Smith, looking back: “I can't think of many things I would have done differently. The naivete at the beginning served us well; we weren't set in any habits of doing things. I'm also glad that we only invited people in the company that we actually wanted to spend time with. I could not imagine working in a business this hectic with people you were not genuinely friends with.”



CARMODY (LEFT) AND MILLING SMITH

*“There are certain things people love to discover on their newspaper site: What's going on tonight, and if there's something I really want to do, will you remind me of it? Where can you still get a good meal at midnight? I heard the neighbor kid ran for a 52-yard touchdown on Friday night. Can I see video of that? Whether you live in Lawrence, Kan., or Washington, D.C., those are great things to be able to turn to your newspaper's website for. Useful stuff is useful stuff regardless of how long your commute is.”* —Rob Curley



FARIS (LEFT) AND DAYTON

**ROB CURLEY, VP-PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, WASHINGTON-POST.NEWSWEEK INTERACTIVE**

Daily papers have struggled mightily to preserve revenues and relevance in these go-go, fragmented media days, and the hell of it is, not even a storied news leader is assured a place on the media menu of the new guard. Enter a self-described nerd from Kansas who showed papers the way online, made local news cool and made everyone in the news game, right up to the *The Washington Post's* Ben Bradlee himself, take notice. A lifelong news fan, Curley began his career as a reporter, later becoming new media director at the *Topeka Capital-Journal*. Later, at the *Lawrence Journal-World*, he gained acclaim for bringing the paper to life online and building a community around engaging and useful web features. His strategy: go “hyper-local”—provide the quickest, deepest most relevant information to your local audience; encourage a dialogue; be useful—across as many media platforms as possible. Curley recently helped launch WPNI's “OnBeing,” a site featuring short video glimpses into the lives of all sorts of people, with other stuff in the pipeline including Curley's take on “what a huge hyper-local community site looks like when your local newspaper is *The Washington Post*.”

**TONY DAVIDSON AND KIM PAPWORTH, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTORS, WIEDEN + KENNEDY LONDON**

Davidson is the first to confess that he and longtime partner Papworth are slow—they like to take their time when it comes to the creative process. But that didn't stop the duo, who've been together more than 20 years, from landing Wieden + Kennedy/London three prime accounts in 2006—Lurpak, Cravendale and *The Guardian*—while producing stellar work for Honda and Nike and sliding in a small campaign for Orange Romania. Honda's technology side became “More Forwards, Please” in a campaign featuring spokesrobot Asimo, who gets in touch with humanity touring Berlin's museums in a Peter Thwaites-directed spot, and whose “first steps” are documented online. Those, as well as a campaign to build interest in Honda's Formula One ventures with video podcasts, round out the agency's strong heritage with the brand, comprised of marvels like “Cog,” “Choir” and “Impossible Dream.” Elsewhere, a controversial poster for Nike featured English footballer Wayne Rooney in a bloody crucifixion pose as “St. Wayne,” which had religious groups up in arms, and the latest edition of Nike's “Run London” pitted North and South against each other. Wieden even managed to get a bite of Orange after managing director Neil Christie spun an impassioned speech after a technical failure, pitching without audiovisual support to a 50-strong Orange contingent alongside TBWA's Jean-Marie Dru and WPP's Martin Sorrell. Orange Romania, impressed by Christie's belief in the agency, awarded Wieden its business, and although a Europe-wide consolidation at the end of 2006 led to the client and shop's eventual split, the agency created notable poster work and TV spots, directed by Nicolai Fuglsig, PES and Smith & Foulkes.

Davidson on his approach to the business: “Kim and I grew out of more traditional agencies, but we were the ones who were always like, ‘Why does it have to be an ad?’ I'm trying to make Wieden/London an ideas hub.”



DAVIDSON (LEFT) AND PAPWORTH

**JONATHAN DAYTON AND VALERIE FARIS, DIRECTORS**

Partners on-set and off, the creative chemistry between husband-and-wife directing team Dayton and Faris first came to a feverish boil in the '80s at MTV, where the pair shot programs and promos before earning acclaim for their groundbreaking clips for Smashing Pumpkins, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, REM and more. In commercials, they boast equally prominent stature, having directed an award-winning body of spots for the likes of Snapple, PS2 and VW, including one of the industry's most beloved commercials of all time, Volkswagen's “Milky Way,” featuring the serene, stargazing roadtrip of four kids in a Cabriolet, accompanied by the soft serenade of the late Nick Drake's “Pink Moon.” This year, Dayton and Faris cemented their status as powerful storytellers on the little indie that could, *Little Miss Sunshine*, the Sundance darling that sold to Fox Searchlight for a record \$10.5 million—the highest of any movie in the festival's history—before pulling in \$83 million at the box office and all kinds of recognition from the film community: a DGA nomination; the top honor at the Producers Guild of America Awards; the ensemble award from SAG; as well as an Academy Award nomination for Best Picture. When they haven't been promoting the film, the duo, repped by Bob Industries, has toggled between advertising and film projects—they went on to shoot superb spots for HP's “The Computer is Personal Again” campaign and the hilarious Old Spice “Painted Experience” while working on a new screenplay with Tom Perrotta, the author/screenwriter of *Election* and *Little Children*.

Faris on holding out for the right project: “A big part of who you are as a director is what you choose to do. If you choose to do something you're luke-warm about, I think that's the wrong way to go. You have to find something that you think is hilarious, or is exactly right for you. I don't know any other way of working.”

**DAVID DROGA, FOUNDER/  
CREATIVE CHAIRMAN, DROGA5**

With its very first project, David Droga's ominously named agency Droga5 scored an internet sensation, along with the Cannes Grand Prix and two Media Lions into the bargain. Marc Ecko's "Still Free," the sly video that seemed to depict a hooded man tagging Air Force One, became a mainstream media moment and a creative touchstone in the ad world, all of which is enough to earn a high-achieving creative a place on this list. But Ecko is only part of the reason the internationally known former Publicis Worldwide creative director remains one of the industry's most interesting players. Droga transitioned from top agency creative director to brand creativity pioneer, building an agency that aims to bring ideas to marketers including but not limited to communications. It's a multidiscipline group from inside and outside the ad world, including: former Publicis CD Duncan Marshall; magazine editor Andrew Essex; Devrin Carlson-Smith, from Microsoft; Kim Howitt, formerly of Nickelodeon.com; and a growing array of producers, designers and interactive types. The 30-plus person shop, just a year old this month, has won accounts such as TracFone, the country's largest prepaid phone outfit, for which Droga5 will oversee everything from packaging to ads, and the Australian brewer Lion Nathan, which is set to launch its Steinlager brand in the U.S. D5 has also set a giving-back precedent with its Tap Project in support of the U.N.'s World Water Day (TapProject.org). But maybe most significantly, Droga has also been busy building the ultimate brand-based online content hub, set to launch this spring.

On how the industry needs to change: "I don't think marketers have enough awareness about how important and big their brands are. The biggest challenge for agencies is getting brands to have faith in their own appeal. They can use that and create their own momentum instead of piggybacking on something else. That's a step change in our industry; that's what we're trying to tap into."



DAVID DROGA

**JIM FARLEY, GROUP VP-MARKETING/  
CORPORATE OFFICER, TOYOTA**

"As business people, we're not creative by nature," Jim Farley told *Creativity* last year. "I'm not a creative person." Contrary to what he thinks, we believe that Farley has all kinds of creative juice flowing through his veins, having had the insight—and the guts—to reconfigure Toyota's marketing approach and "invert the pyramid," as he calls it, by tapping specialists to tailor-fit brand messages to various target demos. Farley, who happens to bear a slight facial and vocal resemblance to his late cousin Chris, the comedian, has been known, like his cousin, to make a lot of noise wherever he goes. When he was at the helm of Scion, he helped to put the experimental Toyota baby on the map with San Francisco's Attik, assembling a panoply of underground talent from the design and art worlds to create a marketing campaign that truly talked to and talked like the kids it wanted behind its wheels. Since then, Farley who now oversees all of Toyota's marketing, over the last year has plotted a similar "dream team" strategy on the brand's biggest launch yet, for the newly redesigned Toyota Tundra. With longtime agency of record Saatchi at the wheel, Farley has assembled a troop of local specialty shops with proven track records in addressing the Tundra's conquest demographic to execute an all-out marketing and advertising effort. And if the strategy pays off again, Toyota just might overtake G.M. to become the biggest car manufacturer in the U.S.

**ZE FRANK, WEB DESIGNER/CREATIVE  
ENTREPRENEUR, ZEFRANK.COM**

These heady days of Web 2.0 have broadened the playing field and the possibilities for the self-made celebrity. The poster child of this phenomenon may very well be Brooklyn-based Ze Frank. A former art director at Dennis Interactive, Frank has built a loyal audience that flocks to his website ZeFrank.com for games, interactivity and, especially, "The Show"—a daily video dispatch that he started last March, where he vowed to post a new episode every weekday for a year. Each show consists of Frank talking about everything from news headlines to ideas about which foods are best to put one's fingers in. Between the quick-cut editing, Frank's rapid-fire delivery and the sheer amount of funny he brings on a daily basis, each show attracts an audience of about 25,000. This in and of itself would be impressive, but the truly creative aspect of Frank's show is how much he involves the audience in its creation. In June, *The New York Times* wrote about the wiki-style page Frank set up so his audience could write the comedy script he would follow for a day dubbed "Fabuloso Friday." Add to that the various video compilations he encourages his viewers to build and photo projects such as the viewer collection of dressed-up vacuum cleaners, and it's clear Frank sees endless possibilities for collaborative online fun. Last September, Frank signed with United Talent Agency, which led to meetings with studio honchos from DreamWorks, Warner Bros. and Fox. We're not sure what offline entertainment Frank has in store for us, but given his 2006 track record, we'll be watching.

**MATT FREEMAN, CHIEF CREATIVE  
OFFICER, TRIBAL DDB**

Ironically, the growth of Tribal DDB's already strong interactive reputation last year can largely be attributed to shaving—the kind that took place on the acclaimed "Shave Everywhere" website, created by the agency network's N.Y. office on behalf of Philips. The ballsy effort, which starred the unabashedly candid Bodygroom Guy, was emblematic of Tribal's willingness to push the boundaries of digital marketing, in terms of both form and content. This is thanks to CCO Matt Freeman's continued focus on establishing specialized units of expertise throughout the Tribal network, resulting in the creation of what the shop calls "Centers of Excellence" in areas like mobile, interactive TV, gaming and, most recently, search & media. Last year also saw global growth, as Freeman tapped former Tribal DDB/Australia MD Adam Good to spearhead the agency's expansion into Asia. By the end of the year, Tribal outposts in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Korea were open, with a Singapore office on the horizon.

On 2006: "In years past, a handful of offices delivered the bulk of the brilliance, but I think we really hit a groove globally last year. We had award-winning work from almost every one of our 36 offices in 21 countries."



PHOTO OF ZE FRANK BY SCOTT BEALE/LAUGHINGSQUID.COM

**JANUS FRIIS AND NIKLAS ZENNSTRÖM, FOUNDERS, JOOST**

Already peerless when it came to the creation of crowd-pleasing peer-to-peer applications like the file-sharing network Kazaa and the internet voice service Skype, digital pioneers Janus Friis and Niklas Zennström took major strides toward unveiling their next piece of technical wizardry in October 2006, when they announced plans to revolutionize interactive TV with the ambiguously named The Venice Project. Befitting the pattern established by the similarly unusually named Kazaa and Skype, the project's official moniker has since been changed to the far more unusual Joost (as in juiced), and beta testing for the software began in December with an eye toward a full launch later in 2007. Designed to turn any PC or laptop into an on-demand television without the hassle of additional equipment, Joost promises to blend the freedom of on-demand TV with the social networking capabilities of YouTube, creating a channel-surfing experience that puts the viewer in complete control. Given the visionary duo's track record, there's no reason to doubt their ability to deliver on that promise. In the meantime, their company is busily brokering strategic content partnership deals to build up the service's eventual video library, most recently forming a timely pact with Viacom right after the latter's falling out with potential Joost rival YouTube, where Viacom's copyrighted clips are being removed.



FRIIS



ZENNSTRÖM



PHOTO BY TREVOR BITTINGER

**STEVE GANDOLFI, EDITOR**

Consider the quiet one-take hilarity of John West's "Salmon," the more uncomfortable banter-driven moments of its "Babies" spot, or the respective forwards-and-backwards timewarps of Xbox's "Champagne" and Guinness "Noitulove." We've been privy to a wealth of satisfying stories via the hands of yes, Daniel Kleinman, the director, but let's not overlook the perhaps less visible hero, editor Gandolfi. Long before he opened Cut + Run in 1997, Gandolfi had been bringing the finest editing moves to subtle comedies, visual spectacles and heart-thumping actioners, all while mentoring a new guard of talents. Last year proved to be one of his most creatively fertile yet, thanks to the Cannes Grand Prix-winning "Noitulove," laffers for PG Tips, and the impossible-looking "Impossible Field," for adidas.

On his definition of creativity: "The ability to create emotion and feelings. And standing behind Paul Weiland, next to John Lloyd and, last but not least, next to Danny Kleinman. Part of creativity is standing on other people's shoulders. I'm not a great editor. I just know who to surround myself with."

**MICHEL GONDRY, DIRECTOR**

Like a few others on this list, Gondry could have pretty much cruised in '06 and one would be hard-pressed not to include his name here. It still seems like every 10th commercial or video or movie is directly or indirectly influenced by some visual innovation Gondry unleashed in his 20-odd years in film. *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, a 2004 collaboration with writer Charlie Kaufman, was a triumph by any measure—a visual wonder with a romantic heart that rounded out Gondry's domination of every film arena. But, unsurprisingly, Gondry didn't sit still in 2006. The year saw the release of *The Science of Sleep*, the first major feature he wrote as well as directed. The film is a mixed-media tour of the director's part rocket scientist, part 12-year-old kid, part wounded-but-committed Oromantic imagination. Based around the strange but adorable Stéphane (played by Gael Garcia Bernal), a character whose dreams and waking life become indistinguishable, *Science* serves up an endless stream of eye-popping dreamscapes while injecting wit and wonder into real life. After the release of the film, the Deitch Projects Gallery in New York staged *The Science of Sleep: An Exhibition of Sculpture and Creepy Pathological Little Gifts*, featuring elements from the film. Gondry also got back to his musical roots, directing *Block Party*, the Dave Chappelle documentary based on the comic's A-list hip-hop gathering in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood. Gondry's next, perhaps biggest feature, *Be Kind Rewind*, will see him partner with Jack Black in recreating Hollywood's biggest blockbusters from scratch. Gondry also returned, in a way, to the commercials fold at the end of last year, signing on to star in the next round of Goodby's "The Computer is Personal Again" campaign, in a spot directed by his brother, Olivier, set to debut later this year. In the midst of it all, the untiring talent had enough juice to create a YouTube moment, with a video in which he magically solved a Rubik's Cube (or did he?) with his feet. And, in a follow-up piece, he repeated the trick—with his nose.



PHOTO OF GONDRY BY ARA

**GERRY GRAF, ECD; IAN REICHENTHAL AND SCOTT VITRONE, GCDS, TBWA/CHIAT/DAY/N.Y.**

Once considered the stepchild of the TBWA family, Chiat/N.Y. now glimmers as one of the brightest creative spots in the network, thanks to this trio of super smart creatives with a penchant for twisted fun. Since they converged three years ago at the agency, they've hurled out spot after hilarious spot of offbeat, yet on-point work—from Nextel's "Dance Party," to candy-themed morsels like Skittles' "Sheepboy" and Starburst's "Art Center." Last year might have been the agency's best and most daring yet with the introduction of Starburst's klepto-spokesperson "Ernie," the skewed Skittles laffers "Trade" and "Beard," and of course that new shim in town, Combos' "Man Mom." The agency also stirred the pot with its Snickers Super Bowl effort, featuring a pair of mechanics in an inadvertent liplock, which nabbed a spot on the top 10 of *USA Today's* Admeter before getting pulled from the air after protests from gay-rights advocacy groups. That was just one disappointment the agency has seen in recent months—its biggest perhaps being the split with client Sprint/Nextel (their final spot was the funny, ironically themed "Fired"). But that hardly puts a dent into what's really made the agency a Madison Avenue dynamo again—thanks to its work on Masterfoods, not only has the client seen sales rise, but last year it was one of the top 10 most awarded advertisers in the world (See *Creativity*, August 2006). Even Lee Clow thinks the creative fire in New York's belly can help bring the rest of the network in touch with its inner boutique. "Even though we're really a giant, I don't want to be a big agency," Clow told *Creativity* earlier this year. "I want to be a cool, smart, small-of-mind agency that does the kind of stuff that bright new brands and bright new agencies do. Gerry and New York represent all that."

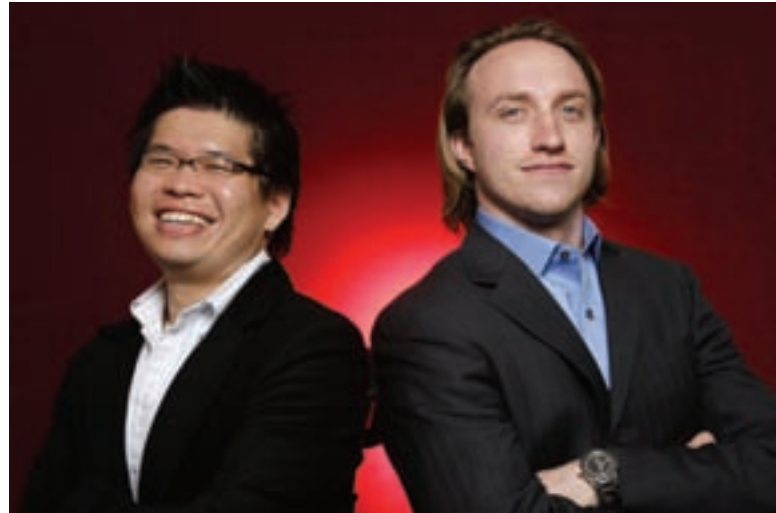
Reichenthal on making Masterfoods an awards magnet: "We're proud of that because the good work came from all of the Masterfoods brands we handle, not just one show-piece account. And the work wasn't created by one superstar team but all of our teams, from junior to senior."

## CHAD HURLEY AND STEVE CHEN, FOUNDERS, YOUTUBE

There's not much one can say about YouTube that isn't more eloquently summed up by these five little words: one point six five billion. Now part of the Google stable, the world awaits the next evolution of the site that has come to symbolize Web 2.0 and user-generated everything. The site has also arguably changed the way ad creative is done. As of '06, for a video ad of any kind to be a success, it must have been thoroughly dissected, debated, rated and duplicated on YouTube. It's hard to tell where the dog ends and the wagging tail begins. Challengers are lining up, and the site has tried the patience of mainstream media outlets but with Google-level resources, the two-year-old YouTube may enjoy a second act.

Chen on the Google connection: "We've unveiled a lot of really exciting features as the result of our relationship with Google, including YouTube videos showing up on Google search pages."

Hurley on YouTube's next steps: "The next phase includes our building more ways to support our users, foster creativity through revenue sharing and have them benefit not just from receiving views, comments and reaction but also in more tangible ways."



CHEN (LEFT) AND HURLEY



IWATA IN MII FORM



MII MIYAMOTO

## SATORU IWATA AND SHIGERU MIYAMOTO, NINTENDO WII CREATORS

Call it Mario's Revenge. Nintendo is back on top as the Wii is poised to dominate the seventh-generation console wars. According to market research firm NPD Group, the Wii eclipsed January sales of the Sony PS3, also introduced last November, and the Xbox 360, which debuted in late '05. It's also on track to outshine the sales of both its competitors this year and next. At press time, Merrill Lynch predicted 30 percent of U.S. homes would have a Wii by 2011. Customers are responding to innovation, it seems, not to mention the Wii's comparatively low \$250 price. With the Wii, Nintendo has successfully countered traditional perceptions of videogaming as a sedentary experience with one that involves movement—a lot of it—via the motion-based Wii Remote. From the semiconductors up, Nintendo refused to participate in the "systems" buildup—characterized by constantly improving speed, graphics and power—and focused on innovating interaction. (The system even provides a clever tool that allows users to create cartoon-like avatars, or "Miis," to represent themselves during gameplay.) Ultimately, the product is proving accessible to people who wouldn't otherwise consider themselves videogamers, as well as to core Nintendo supporters—a precept Nintendo president Iwata held from the project's start. Also, Nintendo's products previously had been designed by individuals, but for the Wii, Miyamoto (Nintendo's general manager, entertainment analysis and development and father of classic titles like *Mario*, *Donkey Kong* and *Zelda*) assembled a strong industrial design team to develop the system. The result? A unit whose every element is informed by strong design—from its unique dynamic remotes (prototyped first in Styrofoam, then clay) to a console finished in a smooth, shiny surface—a Nintendo first.

**"AFTER BEING TOLD ABOUT THE VISION FOR WII TIME AND TIME AGAIN, A FEW PEOPLE AT A TIME WERE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHAT I WAS GETTING AT, AND THEY BEGAN TO SUPPORT THE IDEA ONCE PARTS OF IT STARTED TO BECOME A REALITY. THE IDEA THAT CERTAIN THINGS MUST BE DONE IN ORDER TO ACCOMMODATE THIS VISION EVENTUALLY SPREAD TO EVERYONE IN THE COMPANY. THIS IS WHAT LED TO EVERYONE SHARING THE SAME VISION OF THE NEAR FUTURE."**—IWATA, IN A WII ONLINE INTERVIEW SERIES, "ASK IWATA"

## STEVE JOBS, CEO, APPLE

There have always been a few good reasons to look forward to summer. Apple (formerly known as Apple Computer) added another one recently with the announcement that it would launch its new all-in-one phone device in June. Steve Jobs dropped this loud-est of bombs at the 2007 MacWorld Conference when he revealed this:



He introduced the jaw-dropping iPhone with the immortal words, "Every once in a while a revolutionary product comes along that changes everything." It's a phrase that has applied to several of Apple's products over the years. With the game-changing iPod going strong—and a new addition to the family, the wee Shuffle—Apple also made waves late last year with the unveiling of Apple TV. The latter will allow users to watch content downloaded on their computers on their TVs (in HD, if so desired). But everything sort of pales next to the iPhone announcement. An iPod, internet device and phone in one, with "multi-touch" touchscreen navigation and OS10 operating system that is, of course, an elegant, highly covetable piece of design. Meanwhile, the company, together with TBWA/Chiat/Day, was once again in the thick of popular culture with its much debated, much parodied "Mac vs. PC" advertising campaign. And here's a true story to cap it all off: The other day *Creativity* saw John "I'm a PC" Hodgeman in the Apple store in SoHo.



## PAT JOSEPH, THE MILL, CO-FOUNDER

Founded in London in 1990, the Mill has grown to become a post/effects giant, straddling the visual cutting edge in Europe and the U.S. The New York office, which opened in 2002, is now complemented by a new L.A. office, which opened in December. Mill co-founder Pat Joseph considers this the company's proudest accomplishment of 2006. "Consolidating our U.S. business and opening The Mill/L.A. means we're the first visual effects company to have offices in the three major global advertising centers," he notes. Recent Mill-assisted trophy magnets like Sony Bravia's "Balls," directed by Nicolai Fuglsig, and Honda's "Impossible Dream," directed by Ivan Zacharias, are just the tip of the company's commercials effects iceberg, which includes the stunning "Stunt City" for Rexona (also directed by Zacharias), and Sony PSP's "Icon," directed by Alex Rutterford, featuring a dazzling red action morph "man." Among a host of effects-intensive spots, there's work for Nike ("Mutant Foot" and "Feet") Orange ("Blackout"), Lexus ("Water"), Audi ("Spider") and, of particular note, Johnnie Walker's "Android," from director Dante Ariola and BBH/London, in which a cyborg muses about immortality. Joseph calls this probably his favorite Mill effects job of 2006, demonstrating a particularly "successful collaboration of our 2-D and 3-D teams." Outstanding recent Mill music videos, which offer a wide range of effects showcases, include the underwater adventure of Sigur Ros' "Saeglopur," directed by the band; Coldplay's "The Hardest Part," directed by Mary Wigmore, featuring an exceedingly weird geriatric acrobatic dance team; and the White Stripes' "The Denial Twist," a vastly entertaining Michel Gondry-directed study in spatial dementia.

On the key to doing great work: "Without a doubt it's a great idea." Ultimately, "we can only enhance our client's ideas, and the best work happens when we're involved at the very early stages of a project as a collaborative partner."

On the short-term direction of the business: "We're focusing heavily on our CG department at the moment. We've found that there is major growth going on in CGI, and we're building up that side of the business by investing in great talent and technology."




**NICK LAW, CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER, R/GA**

Keeping up with the constant evolution of emerging technologies has always been R/GA's specialty. From the opening of a London office that will serve as the main European hub, to the formation of the Mobile and Emerging Media (MEMA) group, 2006 was a banner year for the agency's expansion across both multiplatform and geographic boundaries. Then there's former ECD Nick Law's promotion to the CCO post previously held by founder Bob Greenberg (who remains the agency's global CCO), giving R/GA a pair of creative powerhouses to lead them into brave new digital frontiers. The trend of expansion carried over to the work, as the agency constructed a virtual music-mixing and video-recording studio in the form of the Verizon Beatbox Mixer and added to its stellar Nike portfolio with new efforts like the Nike Women interactive dancing tutorial starring Rihanna, and the innovative Nike+ application, which fused Nike running shoes with Apple's iPod and iTunes.

Law on what made 2006 memorable: "From a creative perspective, the diversity of work. We maintained a high standard across an incredible array of creative disciplines—websites, applications, video content, corporate identities, games, mobile interfaces, digital signage and retail environments."

**JON KAMEN, CHAIRMAN/CO-FOUNDER, AND FRANK SCHERMA, PRESIDENT/CO-FOUNDER, @RADICAL.MEDIA**

What don't these guys do? From spots, television shows and films to photography and design—even their own VOD cable channel—turn any media corner and you just might find @radical founders Jon Kamen and Frank Scherma already planted there, with their feelers out, yet again trolling around for the next potential media opportunity. Looking beyond and into every sort of potential production nook and cranny has always been the point since the pair founded the company in 1993, on the motto of being "never established." Last year, we named the shop our Production Company of the Year, in recognition of the fact that all their exploratory efforts have made them pros when it comes to conquering the sorts of multiplatform baskets that marketers and agencies are putting their eggs into these days. Their prowess manifested in another year of not only great spots but also a host of impressive, unconventional outings like Axe and BBH/N.Y.'s innovative "Gamekillers" campaign, which featured a hybrid reality-fiction MTV show that pits dating foes against a real life Romeo; Ford's ambitious "Bold Moves" online documentary series; and more eye-opening celebrity matchups for The Sundance Channel series, *Iconoclasts*. The shop also added more Hollywood hardware to its awards shelf—an Emmy for the History Channel Series *The Ten Days that Changed America*, and expanded the offerings on its car-on-demand channel, DriverTV.

**Scherma on what it takes to inspire the team:** "We must all get out of our comfort zones. We can get too complacent if it doesn't get a little scary."

**Kamen on the same:** "Embracing change, practically forcing it, as a way of constantly raising the bar."


**SCHERMA (LEFT) AND KAMEN**
**SILVIA LAGNADO, UNILEVER, GROUP VP, SAVORY FOODS GLOBAL BRAND SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT**

Beauty is not in the eye of the marketer, as Dove's revolutionary "The Campaign For Real Beauty" has illustrated time and again since its 2004 debut. Dove came out of nowhere and threw down a cultural gauntlet by making women of all facial and body shapes—most famously the fuller-figured ladies in their white underthings—the stars of its ads. Another kind of exploitation or a liberating assault on the beauty myth? There were no shortage of opinions, which was precisely the point. True to the strategy espoused by the initiative's driving force, former Unilever Dove global brand SVP Silvia Lagnado, last year's efforts continued to employ the latest methods—including consumer-generated content, social networks and viral marketing—to spread a message of self-esteem and positive body image among women. And despite the mid-year departure of Lagnado to her current post, the campaign had perhaps its best year, from the jarring placement of the reflective "Self Esteem" spot during the testosterone-fest known as Super Bowl XL, to the "Evolution" short film from Ogilvy/Toronto that showed the time-lapsed transformation of a regular woman into a billboard model.


**KYLIE MATULICK, TODD MUELLER, PARTNERS/CREATIVE DIRECTORS, PSYOP**

N.Y.-based design/animation studio Psyop, founded in 2000, achieved possibly a new level of happiness in 2006 with Coke's "Happiness Factory," via W+K/Amsterdam. The highly acclaimed 90-second tour de force, a trip around the fantastic landscape inside a Coke machine, even got a welcome reprise at last month's Super Bowl. The Psyop partners—CDs Marie Hyon, Marco Spier, Todd Mueller, Kylie Matulick and Eben Mears, along with EP Justin Booth-Clibborn and CFO Sandy Selinger—describe the Coke spot as an "especially exciting roller coaster ride" whose "scale and circuitous collaborative nature" make it their favorite of the year. But a close second is the moody, monochromatic avian wonder called "Crow," for MTV HD, which offered "complete creative freedom and an open brief." Elsewhere, Psyop was behind inventive animation for the "Coke Bottle Films" series and participated in the celebrated adidas adicolor art film series with a live-action-based blizzard of cuts called "Blue."

The Psyoppers on what's next: "We're gathering more creative minds and beginning to develop a number of long-form projects for both film and television. We have this idea for an animated coming-of-age love story about a one-eyed incontinent Shi Tzu called Blinky and his one puddle too many. Look for it in '08."


**MATULICK (LEFT) AND MUELLER**



**MARY MINNICK, FORMER PRESIDENT, MARKETING, STRATEGY AND INNOVATION, EVP, THE COCA-COLA COMPANY**

She's been dubbed "Scary Mary" and "Minnick the Cynic" for the swift, brash, no-bullshit style she'd demonstrated in her 23-year-career at the soda giant. First starting in sales, she rose up Coca-Cola's ranks to oversee operations in the South Pacific, Japan and then all of Asia, and finally, in 2005, to lead the company's marketing, strategy and innovation. Before announcing in January that she'd be leaving her longtime employer to pursue personal business goals (a move that insiders suspect to be a response to her being passed over for the president/COO job in December), Minnick made good on her mission to turn the brand around. In two years, she formed a global marketing team, helped up the marketing budget \$400 million to \$2 billion-plus, amped up new product development, and gave the company's advertising a creatively inspired kick in the pants. One of Minnick's big babies had been a global marketing initiative that ultimately resulted in visually arresting, contemporary yet back-to-the-warm-and-fuzzy-Coke kind of advertising that made the brand famous—from the Jack White-accompanied "What Goes Around," out of Mother/London; to Wieden/Portland's *Grand Theft Auto*-inspired "Videogame," featuring a tough guy with a Coke heart of gold; to, of course, the truly happy-making "Happiness Factory," via Psyop and W+K/Amsterdam.



**PETER MOORE, CORPORATE VP-INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS, ENTERTAINMENT AND DEVICES DIVISION, MICROSOFT**

As former president of Sega, Moore helped to successfully launch the Dreamcast—only to see all his efforts obliterated after Sony responded a year later with the PlayStation 2. But now that he's heading up the interactive entertainment at Microsoft, Moore has been retaliating with a locust-like vengeance on Mr. Kutaragi and co., and, for that matter, any entertainment unit that attempts to take up a piece of living room real estate. Since the Xbox 360's launch in late '05, the consoles now occupy more than 10 million homes, and five million players have joined Xbox Live, an achievement no doubt unlocked through ambitious, sometimes risky marketing and advertising initiatives like an MTV special, a premier party in the desert for hardcore gamers, as well as an uncharacteristically lo-fi advertising launch campaign. Now that the fast-selling Nintendo Wii and Sony's powerhouse PS3 have entered the console wars, we have yet to see which system will dominate in the end, but Microsoft has attempted to remain foremost on gamers' wishlists with stellar, exclusive titles like *Gears of War*, which brought revolutionary new developments to the classic shooter and inspired a magnificent turn in videogame advertising, the poignant "Mad World." Moore also moved headfirst into conquering PC gaming territory, announcing to the press that Jan. 30, 2007, the launch date of Microsoft's new Windows Vista operating system, "will be the most significant day in gaming for the next several years," having been "built from the ground up with gaming as a core scenario."

On great marketing: "The key is being relevant, consistent, delivering on your promises and, ultimately, creating great products and memorable experiences. It's really our job to make consumers feel like they want an Xbox 360, as opposed to telling them why they need it."



**AL MOSELEY AND JOHN NORMAN, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTORS, WIEDEN + KENNEDY/AMSTERDAM**

If 2006 goes down as the year Coke regained its creative swagger, Wieden + Kennedy/Amsterdam is to be given a fair chunk of credit. Soon after ECDs Moseley and Norman arrived in Amsterdam two years ago, the agency won Coke's Olympic work and a global branding assignment that resulted in the "Coke Side of Life" campaign. The latter paved the way for the epic "Happiness Factory," created with Psyop, arguably the highlight of the brand's recently revitalized creative oeuvre and a sure contender at this year's awards festivals. But Coke wasn't it for Amsterdam last year, as far as notable projects go—other standouts include Nike's "Joga Bonito" campaign as well as a series of EA Sports virals starring footballers engaging in zany antics. In the meantime, the office is becoming more multicultural, boasting over 150 employees from 25 nations, including new interactive creative director, Swedish/Argentine Joakim Bergström, who arrived in October from Barcelona's Double You. Soon all will be ensconced in a new space, "infected with digital," featuring full postproduction facilities, edit suites, a design studio, space to lease and a sleeping area—all part of what Norman calls a "Wieden culture village."

Norman on the agency's evolution: "There are a lot of people here who don't 'fit'; they may be nonadvertising people who fit better—poets, painters and misfits."

Moseley adds: "It doesn't feel like an ad agency, it feels like a place where people create stuff. This is chaotic and exciting—you never really know what someone's going to come up with or show us next. We've been accused of being, within a chaotic network, among the most chaotic."

**YUGO NAKAMURA, WEB DESIGNER, THA LTD.**

In the quest to make the internet artful, Tokyo-based web designer Nakamura is considered a leader. Almost as soon as the wonders of Flash were being revealed, the former civil architect began testing and warping its capabilities to create online experiences that border on the surreal. His resume is dotted with awards, ranging from a Cannes Cyber Grand Prix, Clio and One Show kudos for his gorgeous NEC "Ecotonoha" website, and he's been the subject of high-profile exhibitions on three continents. But he hasn't slowed down or ceased leading the way in an industry that seems to change from minute to minute. When asked by the Design Museum just what it is he does, Nakamura responded that he develops an "alternative approach to visual communication on the web." It's difficult not to get caught up in the playful details of his complex works of web art, visible in projects out of his design firm Tha Ltd., or experiments featured on his personal website Yugop.com. One of Nakamura's standout efforts in 2006 was a new website for Japanese clothing retailer Uniqlo, an experience that even the twitchiest of shop-a-phobes would find fascinating. There's also his personal work at Yugop, which might be described as a webbie's wet dream. One of his more whimsical projects is a typographic book search application powered by Amazon, dubbed the Amaztype Zeitgeist, which allows users to see the most popular Amazon searches. Give one a click and the site then collages the author/filmmaker/musician's various works to spell out his or her name. This, combined with other pages featuring motion logic, enables one to interact with and control the action, making the site a labyrinth of random clicking that can contribute to many a lost workday hour.





**BENJAMIN PALMER, PRESIDENT/CO-FOUNDER, THE BARBARIAN GROUP**

Barbarian invasions are usually brutal and swift, but The Barbarian Group's reign has bucked the trend—the Boston-based agency just celebrated its fifth year of residence on the interactive landscape, an occupation marked by sustained dominance (though not a shred of brutality). Led by Palmer, the Barbarians celebrated the milestone by unleashing another year's worth of excellent work, in the process nabbing *Creativity's* second annual Interactive Agency of the Year honors. The 2006 portfolio included new websites like Virgin's "Name Our Planes," Tul's "Graphology" and the groundbreaking Samsung "Anyfilms.net," a customizable mystery yarn that took interactive video to a whole new level with its grid-based "choose your own plot twist" interface—as well as fresh content for old favorites like the Milwaukee's Best Light website, which featured the smashingly successful "Beer Cannon" videos. The Barbarians also expanded their conquest beyond the online space, collaborating on a multimedia interactive installation for Saturn's exhibit at *Wired's* NextFest. It's all part of a concerted effort to establish a dedicated R&D environment Palmer refers to as "the labs," where all Barbarians can devote a percentage of their time to working on experimental projects, software and content.

On The Barbarian Group's fifth anniversary: "We started this whole thing in an apartment in December 2001, with some computers and optimism. We actually had a five-year plan when we started, and it ended up working a lot better than we had even hoped. Last year was the first year that we actually felt like this might just work out."



**CHRIS PALMER, DIRECTOR, GORGEOUS PRODUCTIONS**

Chris Palmer may not be the most conspicuous creative force on the roster of the company he founded in 1997, with fellow director Frank Budgen and managing director Paul Rothwell, but last year the typically guarded talent couldn't help but fall under the spotlight's glare by way of some of this year's spots gems, like the technically acrobatic Sky One promo that brought *The Simpsons'* opener into live-action perspective and became an instant darling on the viral circuit—at last glance, it was the ninth most viewed clip in the history of YouTube. Palmer also directed the award-winning PSA for the British Department of Transport illustrating the dangers of mindless mobile phoning, for which he enlisted a group of his friends to shoot much of the action themselves on a cellphone camera. Beyond that, Palmer, an avid soccer fan, brought poignant touches to Carlsberg's "Old Lions," casting senior football legends as a pub team, and he also brought graceful visuals to an award-winning CDC spot for Saatchi/N.Y that literally brings the sun out to play.

On his proudest accomplishment of the last year: "Gaining a black belt in origami."

On his biggest commercial challenge of 2006: "The Gorgeous calendar. Tough client, lousy budget, last minute. *Simpsons'* was what you'd call technically demanding. It took about a year off my life."

**MARK PARKER, CEO, NIKE**

The ultimate insider, with 25-plus years at Nike under his belt, Mark Parker took the CEO reins in January of last year, following the ouster of William Perez, and he logged a successful year from both a business and a creative standpoint (which, at companies like Nike, of course, are intimately linked). Nike finished third among advertisers in the '06 *Creativity Awards* Report with winning work from all over the world, in every media category. Nike did big things in football this year, including the "Joga Bonito" project, featuring the Google-backed Joga.com social networking site, with Nike football videos viewed more than 10 million times during World Cup. As far as viral video prowess goes, the marketer also had the distinction of having one of the most viewed YouTube videos of all time—the clip of Ronaldinho performing improbable feats while wearing some nifty gold boots. And, to cap it off, Nike authored one of the biggest of big ideas in the marketing space last year, teaming with its spiritual counterpart, Apple, to link the new Nike Air Zoom sneaker with the iPod Nano—the two pieces of gear worked together as a performance tracker and enhancer. With the iPod keeping track of info, runners could track time, distance, calories burned and other athletic stats and then download and share info at the R/GA-designed site, Nikeplus.com. Not since the Reese's Peanut Butter Cup has a union made such sweet music.



**P.J. PEREIRA, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR, AKQA**

It's a small world after all, as AKQA found out in 2006. Having already recruited a team of international stars the previous year (including ECDs Lars Bastholm, Rei Inamoto and Pereira himself), the interactive agency with a distinctly worldly flavor continued to bring its global plan to fruition, adding personnel from Japan, Brazil, Germany, Canada, South Africa and India, while scoring top global account wins like McDonald's and Coke—all from a relatively small network of six offices worldwide, including a new office in Shanghai that opened in November. From his post at AKQA/San Francisco, Pereira oversaw some of the agency's most notable work of the year, including the online component of Sprite's "SubLymonal" campaign (as well as its tie-in with the sprawling *Lost* alternate reality game); innovative efforts for Windows Live Messenger (such as the single-page illustrated website "The Way News Spreads"); the website for Visa's "Life Takes Visa" rebranding campaign; and an online experience for the immensely popular Xbox title *Gears of War*. Pereira also scored a major win for the next generation of advertising superstars, leading the effort to establish the Future Lions—the first creative competition exclusively for students at Cannes.

On 2006: "It was the year that Lars, Rei and myself, plus Brendan Dibona from our Washington, D.C. office and James Hilton and Daniel Bonner from AKQA/London, really worked to make the global nature of the team reach all levels of the creative department. It started to become part of our culture, and ultimately it showed in the work. I don't believe it's a coincidence that the most relevant fact of 2006 was that we won so many global accounts, even though we have only six offices around the world."



**ANDREA RAGNETTI, CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER, ROYAL PHILIPS ELECTRONICS, AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, PHILIPS DOMESTIC APPLIANCES AND PERSONAL CARE**

After landing at Philips in January 2003 as the Dutch electronics giant's first ever CMO, the former P&G and Reckitt Benckiser exec has been on a tear to strip the brand's products and practices down to a simple, design-centric focus. In 2004, Ragnetti introduced the "Sense and Simplicity" campaign, the rallying cry that has focused the company's product development on easy to use, design-minded products like the Senseo coffee maker. It's also led to clever, "simplicity"-driven marketing moves like last year's massive wipeout of advertising from a variety of media portals. Philips dished out \$2 million last year to CBS in order to give viewers longer uninterrupted programming segments during *60 Minutes*. It also paid \$5 million to remove all the ad pages between the cover and table of contents of various Time Inc. publications, and in December it secured free premium access to sites like ESPN.com and WSJ.com for online news gatherers. Ragnetti's mantra has also led to an overhaul of the company's processes, leading to the formation of the Philips Simplicity Advisory Board. Chaired by Ragnetti, the board is comprised of fashion designer Sara Berman, MIT professor and design guru John Maeda, architect Gary Chang, and radiologist/professor Dr. Peggy Fritzsche, who have been enlisted to inject the company with fresh outside perspective.





#### PHILIP ROSEDALE, FOUNDER, LINDEN LAB

Rosedale saw his most famous creation officially begin a whole new life in 2006—life in the mainstream. The immersive virtual world known as Second Life exploded into the social zeitgeist in a big way, transforming from a relatively obscure gathering place for the internet set into the hottest destination outside the real world, with its own thriving culture, lucrative economy and skyrocketing population (which nearly doubled from one million to two million registered accounts in the last two months of 2006 alone). The SL renaissance benefited from the wave of brands and agencies that descended upon the virtual landscape armed with fresh ideas for turning it into the next big marketing frontier—brands like American Apparel (a virtual store), Starwood Hotels (a virtual “test run” version of its new Aloft hotel) and Pontiac (an entire island dedicated to car enthusiasts); and agencies like BBH and Leo Burnett. But thanks to Rosedale’s unlimited vision for Second Life’s entertainment potential, the virtual world has transcended the advertising and internet communities to become a genuine pop culture phenomenon. Log on to Second Life at any given time of day, and you might stumble upon a Duran Duran concert, a movie premiere or Sweden’s official embassy.

On the key to Second Life’s success over the past year: “Because Second Life is 99 percent user-created, population growth tends to drive itself. We’ve seen a number of high-profile businesses and media companies enter Second Life, and the media attention that came along with these presences has only helped to drive additional resident growth.”

#### KEVIN RODDY, EXECUTIVE CREATIVE DIRECTOR, BBH/NEW YORK

Life got a bit tougher for snakes like Kash Munni, The One Upper and British Accent Guy, thanks to BBH/N.Y., which created *The Gamekillers*, a groundbreaking hour-long piece of branded entertainment for the launch of Unilever’s Axe Dry. With the help of @radical.media and The Glue Society, BBH told the story of a guy trying to woo a lady while the aforementioned snakes make their best attempts to fluster him. BBH made another masterful stroke in the form of Smirnoff’s “Tea Party” viral clip, in which WASPy Connecticut dwellers emulate rappers, extolling the praises of yachting, money and the brand’s Raw Tea. Axe also got cryptic with “The Order of the Serpentine,” a faux secret society that encourages kids to wash away the shame of a regrettable affair. It also toughened up partygoers for all the action they’ll get on vacation with “Spring Break Boot Camp” training videos.

On the future: “We still have to be excellent at a TV commercial or a print ad, but we also have to be excellent at something new. There are quite a few agencies that are doing one or another, but I think the Holy Grail is embracing it all, finding a way to do it all equally well. I think in 2006 we took a first step toward that.”



#### DAVID ROMAN, PRESIDENT—WORLDWIDE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS, PERSONAL SYSTEMS GROUP, HEWLETT—PACKARD

Thanks to Roman, consumers now have access to HP PCs’ softer—and cooler—side, once obscured by the stodgy ol’ engineering focus that used to define the marketing of the tech brand. Last year, the former Apple and Nvidia exec decided to let HP out to play, spearheading, along with agency Goodby Silverstein & Partners, the launch of HP’s “The Computer is Personal Again” campaign, the keystone of which has been a series of spots featuring the headless bodies of mystery celebrities whose hand gestures, paired with some clever motion graphics, give them away to be Jay-Z, Mark Burnett, Pharrell Williams, Mark Cuban and others. Other facets of the ongoing campaign include design-driven online and print ads featuring Saul Bass-inspired graphics, and a web destination that allowed visitors to check out Jay-Z’s desktop and create their own version of the “hands” ads. HP even partnered with MTV to host its own hookup show, which allowed kids to choose their next date, or even their next drummer, based on the contents of their hard drives. Although the brand subsequently got a different kind of media attention when news broke that company execs had been involved in unethical spying practices, it remains stronger than ever in the marketplace—over the last year HP has consistently gained ground over main competitor Dell, and last month it announced that overall first-quarter results jumped 11 percent over last year. In PCs, Roman’s domain, sales were up 17 percent. Meanwhile, Roman and team aren’t letting up in ’07. “We’re taking the campaign to the next level with rich imagery and a broader variety of interesting characters,” he says.

On bringing creativity to HP’s culture: “It’s about providing a learning culture, which includes a tolerance for mistakes. If you’re going to push the limits, not everything is going to be perfect. You also have to have experienced talent who understand what doesn’t work and who will change it quickly—and who can immediately recognize and accelerate what does work.”



#### BLAKE ROSS, CO-CREATOR, FIREFOX

Ross changed the way we browse the internet, unseating such household names as Netscape and Internet Explorer in the process—all at the tender age of 19. That was back in 2004, when the software prodigy co-created Mozilla’s now celebrated Firefox browser with fellow developer Dave Hyatt. Billed as a more streamlined and user-friendly alternative to the other major web browsers, Firefox instantly appealed to the websurfing masses, garnering 100 million downloads in its first year while becoming the browser of choice for the newest generation of technophiles. In 2006, less than two years after Firefox 1.0 was launched, Ross—now at the ripe old age of 21—and Mozilla released Firefox 2.0, an event that helped push the browser beyond the 200 million-download milestone. The year also saw Ross take major steps forward with his latest project, a collaboration with Firebug creator Joe Hewitt, called Parakey. Envisioned as a user interface that melds the best features of a web browser and an operating system, Parakey received key funding with an eye toward a 2007 debut.

On why Firefox has been so successful: “There are plenty of reasons to create software these days—to make money, grow market share or extend a brand. But in each case, user satisfaction is just a means to an end. In Firefox, a non-profit product, making software more enjoyable has always been the endgame, and I think that motivation yields a more attractive product. Version 2 was remarkable largely for what it’s not: another bloated software upgrade that adds useless features and shuffles existing ones around just to make people feel like they’re getting something new. Instead, we focused on aggressively fine-tuning the most commonly used areas of the product—such as tabbed browsing and search—to make them work even better. I think the release set the tone for future Firefox development and proved to people that we’re all about making things easier, as opposed to flashier.”



**ROBERT SAVILLE AND MARK WAITES, CO-FOUNDERS/CO-CDS, MOTHER/LONDON**

Mother turns 10 this year, which in hot shop time should make it Methuselah. But co-creative director/founding partner Waites says the wild ride feels more like two years. Neither he nor the agency are showing much gray—Mother's still got a quirky swagger, and it's still independent. Making a most triumphant return were Al and Monkey, the former ITV spokesduo who came back to capture even more British hearts for PG Tips tea. Then there's Mother's heartfelt (ahem, syrupy) holiday Coca-Cola spot, "The Greatest Gift," which might make you think its cutting edge was now buttering a scone; but accompanying that was Nagi Noda's offbeat commercial debut, backed with a track by Jack White. U.K. cosmetics brand Boots became sexy with Chris Palmer's "Alice in Boudoirland" and David LaChapelle's glammed-up "'Tis The Season To Be Gorgeous." The agency also teamed up with lad mag *Zoo* for a *Brewster's Millions* spending spree. Elsewhere, kid-roadies sweated while rock stars got all the glory for XM satellite radio; Schweppes accelerated retro cocktail culture; and Pot Noodle sang the day away in the noodle mines. Orange dealt the biggest blow to the agency when it left early in the year, but a few great projects came out after the fact—notably a branded field trip to Spain that anchored the "Animals" campaign, and a continuation of the Orange Film Board's pre-cinema meddling. With the New York office humming along and Madre in Buenos Aires warming up, no one can help but imagine another strong decade.

Waites on keeping true to your roots: "You don't change. The things you set out to do you keep doing. You don't sell. It keeps our intentions pretty pure; we're not looking to take on clients to fulfill somebody else's projections and their targets. We're allowed to move at our own pace. We'd be a lousy agency in captivity."

**JUREEPORN THAIDUMRONG****SUSAN SELLERS, GEORGIANNA STOUT AND MICHAEL ROCK, FOUNDERS, 2x4**

Last year, 13-year-old New York design firm 2x4, led by principals Sellers, Stout and Rock, reached the heights of industry recognition, winning the 2006 Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award in Communications Design. The firm, also named *Creativity's* 2006 Design Company of the Year, has garnered acclaim in a variety of design disciplines, spanning print, film/video, the web and environment design. Eclectic as 2x4 may be, its work is distinguished by a certain intellectual chic, leaning decidedly toward the upscale and the highbrow. Recent projects include: the brand ID and website for online art gallery Artocracy; the brand ID and environmental graphics for the Dallas Center for the Performing Arts; exhibition design for the Guggenheim Museum; environmental graphics at the new downtown Museum of Contemporary Arts San Diego; publication design for Open Society Institute; in-store wallpaper and "Waist Down" exhibition materials for Prada (the show is a traveling exhibit devoted to the skirt); *Twice Untitled and Other Pictures (Looking Back)*, a book of the work of photographer Louise Lawler, for the Wexner Center for the Arts; *Tom Sachs*, a book about the American sculptor, for Fondazione Prada; and environmental graphics for Lincoln Center, and for the Glass Pavilion at the Toledo Museum of Art.

Stout on her most consistent source of inspiration in 2006: "Beard Papa cream puffs."

**FROM LEFT: SELLERS, STOUT AND ROCK****ERICH STAMMINGER, PRESIDENT/CEO, ADIDAS**

Led by 24-year adidas vet Erich Stamminger, who was appointed president/CEO early in 2006, the aggressive marketing combo of "Impossible is Nothing" and "+10," along with a rich stable of world athletes, allows adidas and the one-two international punch of agencies TBWA and 180 to achieve global soccer dominance—right down to its name on the World Cup match ball. Indeed, adidas was, predictably, all over the FIFA World Cup last year, held on its own German turf, with out-of-home spectaculars like star goalie Oliver Kahn spanning a Munich Autobahn; a giant football fresco of adidas endorsers in the lobby of the Cologne train station; building-high "+10" billboards featuring individual stars in the manner of humongous trading cards; as well as a blitz of TV and interactive work, including the "Modular Man" campaign (themed "A player is greater than the sum of his parts"); the "Impossible Team" campaign, featuring kids picking all-star teams; and a slow-motion marvel of a film made with Paris' Plex, demonstrating the built-in suspension of the adiStar shoe. On the artsier side, the brand's Originals division was a generous patron, commissioning the celebrated adicolor podcast series, featuring color-coded films made by the likes of Psyop, Saiman Chow, Charlie White, Neill Blomkamp, and the team of Roman Coppola and Andy Bruntel. In addition, there's a new series of Originals print ads featuring the surreal photography of Nadav Kander.

**JUREEPORN THAIDUMRONG, FOUNDER, JEH UNITED**

In an industry where standout female leadership is a disturbing rarity, Jureeporn "Judee" Thaidumrong's 15-plus years in the business sets an example anyone in advertising should aspire to—yes, that means you, too, white Western male. Before she opened up her own 25-person, 20-plus-client shop in Bangkok, Jeh (Thai for "big sister") United in 2005, she'd already accomplished a lifetime's worth of creative feats. Early in her career, spent at agencies like DY&R, O&M's Results Bangkok, and Saatchi/Bangkok, the Thai ad industry had already dubbed her "angel copywriter," for mostly hilarious, headturning work that earned her 13 Golds at Thailand's main adfest, leading to various CD positions, more honors and a reputation as one of the most awarded creatives in her country. Last year, as head of her own shop, she was at her finest with the excellently absurd Smooth-E campaign—the Gold Lion-winning effort that many considered the dark horse favorite for the Film Grand Prix. The set of 90-second spots ran serially over the course of several weeks, telling the story of an ugly duckling of a girl who, thanks to Smooth-E face foam, goes through a miraculous transformation and finds love in unexpected places—pretty standard stuff plot-wise, but ingeniously executed thanks to some unabashedly over-the-top product promotion, super slapstick silliness, a tranny spokesperson and a pair of she-boy foils. And while Thaidumrong is an admitted workaholic, she manages to take time out of her busy schedule to feed stray dogs in the neighborhood—her biggest hobby—and to record songs for her own upcoming album.

On inspiring her staff: "I support individuality. I always tell everybody that our office is like a zoo, and each person is one kind of animal. We don't need to like the same stuff, wear the same clothes, watch the same movies or read the same books. I believe everyone has many experiences in life that make them unique. I'd like for everyone to bring their inner strength to their creative work; each of us has different kinds of creative potential."



IVAN ZACHARIAS

**IVAN ZACHARIAS, DIRECTOR**

With a total of three spots released in the last year, the word “prolific” isn’t the first that comes to mind when describing Ivan Zacharias’ 2006 commercials output. Yet, considering the work itself, the spots qualify as a pretty significant feat. The Czech-born director, repped by Smuggler, followed up the success of 2005’s standout Honda commercial, “Impossible Dream,” with an intricate World Cup adidas spot, dropping past and present football stars into a playground pitch fantasy. He also helmed a Nike commercial revealing Maria Sharapova as more than just a pretty face, and a Vaseline effort in which a slew of naked people become a gorgeous skin collage. Despite his general lack of availability (or could it be because of it?), his commitment to quality and his artistic touch keep Zacharias atop any creative’s directorial wish list. Anyone granted access to his talent must have fulfilled certain prerequisites: first off, his spots must not only have a good idea, he has to like the idea. And each commercial must have an ending that, as Zacharias puts it, “makes sense and doesn’t completely kill the idea.” After that it’s about timing—how much time he wants to be away from his family, particularly his 2-year-old son, and how much time is left in the year. That’s because, in the European manner, he’s so involved in every aspect of a production—from shooting to editing to sound—that 12 months tend to fill up fast. One of his favorite projects of the year was working with Sharapova on “Pretty,” but Zacharias says his proudest accomplishment was four short films he shot for MTV encouraging Czech youth to vote in their federal election. This year, Zacharias already has his first spot on the air, a Hollywood-centric comedy for Diet Coke and Wieden + Kennedy, which debuted on the Oscars.

On his goals for 2007: “I’d like to do a feature film, just to see if I can. Actually, any monkey can make a feature—I want to see if I can make a good one. You could find out you’re crap, but it’s worth risking it to see if you can do it.”



**ED ULBRICH, PRESIDENT, DIGITAL DOMAIN**

Innovation, invention and inspiration are three words that sum up Digital Domain’s 2006. The past year is particularly representative of how the company cultivates its success and where it intends to go in the near future. In terms of innovation, DD was involved in two of the most impressive videogame spots of the year, for *Gears of War* and *Halo 3* (“Starry Night”). The *Gears of War* spot, “Mad World,” was created within the game engine and, according to Ulbrich, it represents the “tip of the iceberg” in the convergence of entertainment, advertising and gaming. While its work on Oscar nominees and winners like *True Lies* and *Titanic*, or 2006 films like *Flags of Our Fathers* and *Letters From Iwo Jima* certainly makes Digital Domain a major player in feature film visual effects, Ulbrich says the company’s success is built on the back of its commercials. That’s the thinking behind its most controversial project of the year, resurrecting the late Orville Redenbacher via CG, for Crispin Porter + Bogusky. Though the spot was widely panned (and even more widely noticed), the technological innovations it represents will certainly help the work for the upcoming David Fincher film *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, set for release next year. “I make no apologies for the Orville work,” says Ulbrich, who was visual effects executive producer on Fincher’s latest film, the critically acclaimed *Zodiac*. “Digital human work is the most complex thing that can be done in visual computing, period. Each time we do it, it gets a bit easier and we learn a little bit more.” The company also made waves on the web with VWFeatures.com and its “customized filmmaking technologies,” which allow users to customize their own VW and have it star in its own web video. As for the future, Windcrest Capital’s acquisition of Digital Domain last May triggered significant growth in both the talent and technological infrastructure, as well as expansion into emerging media and web work.

On 2006: “We’re always involved in doing the really hard stuff. It’s true to the brand, it’s who we are and why we started.”

**TED WARD, VP-MARKETING, GEICO**

In 2006, the stalwart Geico spokeslizard was overtaken by his indignant cavemen brethren as the fun-loving insurance company’s most popular advertising icon. Under the leadership of Ted Ward, the overly sensitive proto-humans’ star had been rising ever since their first spot in 2005, and last year saw a rapid evolution from cheeky one-off to a full-fledged multiplatform campaign, which unfolded in a new wave of memorable spots like “Airport,” “Topic” and “Therapy,” and online with a viral movie trailer and the “Caveman’s Crib” website. Word’s even out that the cavemen have their own ABC sitcom in the works. Nevertheless, the gecko quipped on, in spots that took him on a talk show tour, talking up the virtues of Geico.com. Geico’s cast of characters also expanded to include a bevy of C-list celebrities like Little Richard and Charo in a new customer testimonial campaign, and there was even another round of the classic “I have good news—I just saved a bunch of money on my car insurance” spots.

On the cavemen’s popularity: “They’re just so darn handsome, don’t you think? It probably doesn’t hurt that they’re completely different than anything out there right now—they have attitude. I think everyone is having fun following the storyline, too. First we offended them, then we apologized, then we kept going with the ‘Geico.com is so easy’ message. And now, we even have cavemen switching to Geico. Who knows where it will go next?”



**SEBASTIAN WILHELM AND MAXIMILIANO ANSELMO, CREATIVE DIRECTORS, SANTO, BUENOS AIRES**

It seems like everything Santo touches is blessed. The Argentine agency put out a stunning string of projects in 2006 with nary a miss among them. The shop spread its small self across a broad variety of categories and big-name clients—soft drinks (Coca-Cola Light, Coke’s football work), beauty products (Unilever’s Lux) and telecom (Telecom Arnet). The creative, however, all boasted the singular Santo stamp of wit and warmth. The Arnet work, for example, employed the likes of an online spokesperson with serious combover issues to silly low-budget spots that simply yet effectively encapsulated the fun of online timewasting. Led by Wilhelm (a former partner of Fallon/London’s Juan Cabral while both were at Mother/London) and Anselmo, the shop is approaching its two-year anniversary at the forefront of a boldly resurgent Argentine scene, sustained on a childlike ethos.

Anselmo on the best part of 2006: “Demonstrating that the mystique behind an agency isn’t built only with a speech at an end-of-year party. Santo distributes part of the profits among all of the people who work in the agency. You should see how different and smooth a place can be when everyone really feels like an owner.”



WILHELM (LEFT) AND ANSELMO

So much wisdom flowed from our 50 that it was impossible to get it all in the preceding report. Here, some final words on creating a culture, the nature of inspiration, present and future challenges, and more.

## What Inspires You?

**Cliff Bleszinski:** “My childhood and my dreams continue to inspire me. I’m a big kid at heart and in many ways I refuse to grow up. It’s probably a big reason why I do what I do; crafting controllable fantasies and dreams as its own form of career-induced therapy. I’m exorcising demons here!”

**Jamie Barrett:** “What consistently inspires me? Other people. I know that’s probably the lamest answer I could give, but there it is. Put me in a room by myself and tell me to do great advertising, and I’d probably take naps and watch sports on TV. Put me in a building with 300 people who seem to somehow need me, and I’ll work incredibly hard.”

## How to Build a Creative Culture

**Rob Curley:** “I think it’s really important to hire self-motivated people who generally are much smarter than me. Then you layer in a very light atmosphere that encourages people to joke around with each other and enjoy their time in the office. It’s also good to give them lots of free highly caffeinated beverages. Plus, if you asked anyone on our team if they worked for me, they would all correct you to say that they worked with me, not for me. I like that.”

**Psyop:** “Never conform to a set methodology and always keep an open mind. We genuinely try to make the production process as collaborative as possible. Everyone likes to be heard, and more often than not around here they have really great things to say. But you can’t underestimate the importance of foosball and karaoke.”

**Cliff Bleszinski:** “I think when you create something that has very cool themes or very cool elements, those elements tend to cascade down through the marketing and ultimately to the customer, which translates to a better kind of shared vision and bigger sales. I share my enthusiasm for the art of creating with my peers on a day-to-day basis through a shared appreciation of all forms of entertainment. An enthusiastic exchange with one of our talented programmers or artists is grist for the mental mill. It’s this fuel that drives and motivates everyone to make a compelling product.”

## The Key to Doing Great Work

**Steve Simpson:** “Impossible to answer, but this can’t hurt: Be clear and specific about what you’re trying to say in the first place. The rest is freedom.”

**Jureporn Thaidumrong:** “Challenge yourself all the time.”

**Richard Bullock:** “I don’t think there’s a key. It’s more like a safe that needs cracking every time. You have to listen real hard and be very quiet.”

## Challenges Now

**David Droga:** “Clients are excited by having a broader canvas, though they’re sometimes intimidated by just leaping in. It’s new for everyone. The traditional way things work in the world we all come from is, the mechanics are in place and things just come out the other end. Things have been determined before ideas have been set—the only guarantee is *something* will come out the other end. But what we’re trying to do is change the process and the thinking if possible—building new mechanics about the process of how things can be made. The best solution may be anything. It could even be TV and press. I’ll be as excited by that as I will be by anything else.”

**P.J. Pereira:** “Today, everyone wants a viral video, a guerrilla microsite, an engaging way to sneak into the user-generated content party. I’m afraid most of them do it just for the hype. The challenge we have in 2007 is to avoid letting the web become the new TV spot—the kind of thing that is so sexy to do that we stop questioning if that’s what we really need to make.”

**Ian Reichenthal:** “Creating good advertising is hard. It’s as hard today as it was yesterday, or 10 years ago. Anyone who has ever made something that they’re proud of knows the work that goes into coming up with an original idea, and keeping that idea intact, all the way from selling it to producing it.”

## What’s Next?

**Philip Rosedale:** “Back in the early ’90s, who could have predicted what the web is today? Maintaining a virtual presence may become ubiquitous in a few years, perhaps as cellphones and e-mail addresses are today, and we’d like to be there to facilitate that transition. As far as future plans, we’re looking forward to international expansion, with support for more languages and country-specific versions in 2007.”

**Matt Freeman:** “A bunch of our offices have started competing against each other online in *Gears of War* and *Call of Duty*. I’m hoping to convert them to Wii bowling tournaments or doubles tennis in order to defuse what is becoming an increasingly contentious and explosive situation. I fear that this, if combined with office happy hours, could crumble the network we’ve worked so hard to build.” OK, and some predictions for the biggest change to the interactive landscape in 2007? “Joost and iPhone—two potential snowballs in iTV and mobile, respectively. The future may finally arrive.”

**Cliff Bleszinski:** “In a post-*Gears* world, the work that is going to change anything has already been laid out there. I think what *Gears* has done is spoiled a lot of gamers in regard to the things we did in the game. I don’t think they’re going to necessarily realize it until they play a lot of other product. For example: the visuals in the game; the game being forgiving about its checkpoints; a lot of the really cool game mechanics with which we evolved the shooter genre; the pacing; constantly evolving the scenarios the players are in; the ease of use getting online and playing a great Xbox live match—I think we set the bar high in a lot of areas and a lot of people are going to be playing catch-up.”

**Nick Law:** “The qualifier ‘interactive’ will disappear. Mobile will become serious. Bob Greenberg will grow a pencil mustache. My robotic valet will finally learn to iron.”

**Bob Greenberg:** “I think we’ll be seeing brands creating more applications that add value to a consumer experience, enhancing the relationship between a brand and a consumer, and ideally bringing the consumer into a community. We’ll also see the integration of the web and mobile computing in physical spaces like retail and entertainment environments. I think the agency world will see digital agencies moving toward full-service agencies.”

**P.J. Pereira:** “Everything is becoming a screen. This will be the year when agencies of all kinds will have to learn new interactive languages for all sorts of platforms. It’s a level playing field all over again. And as engaging content is becoming more and more relevant in this on-demand world, ad creatives will have to learn to let go and learn how to collaborate with creatives from other disciplines. I’ve been trying to make my team work with screenwriters and asking our media guys to help me bring cool exclusive content from our media partners, for example. But I know it’s just the beginning.”

**Benjamin Palmer:** “I think there is so much interesting work out there, and the world at large is finally starting to be as excited about the internet as we are, so it’s all very exciting. I hope that the new change is going to be brands investing in bigger, sustainable online ideas. Looking at what is out there, how many marketing sites do you interact with that have been around for a while? How many do you think will be around for a long time in the future? I feel like the trial period of the internet is over in clients’ minds and they’re ready to do some big things.”

## And . . . What is creativity?

**Jonathan Dayton:** “I think creativity is always starting from scratch and never considering that you’re an expert on something. When you start from that humble place, creativity flows. The worst enemy of creativity is when you think you know something. When you really allow yourself to feel that you don’t know anything, creative ideas spring forward. I feel that when things go well for us, it’s when we come from that perspective. In our commercials work, and certainly in our features, we always feel like we’re starting over every time we go. You just get comfortable after doing it for so many years. It’s always scary, you always feel nervous, but it’s the only way to go.”